ERIC Document Resume	See Instruction Sheet	DATE OF RESUME	DATE RECEIVED

A. PUBLICATION DATA

1. ERIC NUMBER	2. ORIGINATOR CONTROL NO(S).	3. IDENTIFICATION NO.	DO NOT WRITE IN SPACE BELOW
ED002511	N.A.	N.A.	

4. AUTHOR(S): Sizemore, Mamie

5. TITLE OF DOCUMENT ABSTRACTED: Objectives and Processes of Second Language Learning

6. PUBLICATION TITLE: N.A.

7. EDITOR(S): N.A.

8. PLACE OF ORIGIN
ORG. State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Indian Education
ST.
CITY, STATE Phoenix, Arizona
TELE. EXT.
INST/LOC CODE

9. PUBLISHER OR SOURCE State Department of Public Instruction, Division of Indian Education, State House, Phoenix, Arizona

10. VOL.	11. PAGES	12. MO./YR.	13. TOTAL PP.
N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	13

MICROFILM COPY AVAILABLE YES ☒ NO ☐

COPYRIGHT GRANTED YES ☐ NO ☒

COPYRIGHT RELEASE FILED YES ☐ NO ☐

TYPE OF REPORT
PROPOSAL ☐
IN-PROGRESS ☐
FINAL ☐
FOLLOW-UP ☐

OTHER ERIC REFERENCES:

ERIC SATELLITE CODE

B. INDEXING DATA

14. SUBJECT AREA

15. TYPE OF ENDEAVOR Teacher's Guide

16. INDEXING TERMS (6-12)				
language arts	curriculum	non-English speaking children		
teaching methods	objectives	English as a second language		
teaching aids	manuals			
	American Indians			

17. ABSTRACT (MAX. 250 WORDS)

The objectives of second language teaching, and specific directions for presenting and drilling structures by the use of certain gestures, were presented.

Recommendations for concentrating efforts on the essentials of language learning revolved around an emphasis on the teaching of the language itself rather than about its history, vocabulary, literature, literary forms, and writing system. The basis of learning a language was defined as the ability to respond to situations by saying appropriate things in it, to understand what others say in it, and, ultimately, to read and write it.

Patterns of pronunciation and of hearing and grammar patterns were said to constitute the real difficulties of the beginning language learner. To teach them, the teacher was advised to emphasize constant drill and to utilize only enough vocabulary to make such drill possible.

Specific gestures were suggested to indicate number and gender of all pronouns and to indicate "this" and "that." Uses of the gestures in the teaching situation for general presentation and drilling, for reinforcement of concepts, for imitating or copying the teacher's actions and sentence patterns, were elaborated upon and were applied in some examples. Gestures were also recommended because they enabled presentation to be understood without explanation, ensured the undivided attention of the class, enabled the teacher to organize students' speech activity during drill while remaining silent, and facilitated the elimination of time-consuming directions once they were well-known by the class.

ERIC No.

18. SOURCE OF ABSTRACT

C. FUNDING DATA

19. SUPPORTING ORGANIZATION	20. DIVISION OR DEPT.	21. CONTRACT NO. / PROJECT NO.
	22. TOTAL COST OF PROJECT	
	23. DURATION OF PROJECT	U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare Office of Education

ERIC Form 1

Migrant Education - Spanish Speaking

ED002511

OBJECTIVES AND PROCESSES OF SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Volume 3

Number 5

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The Speech is the Language: No matter if the final result desired is to read, English as a second language ------ the structure and the sound system, with a limited vocabulary, - - - -- must be learned through speech.

U. S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION AND WELFARE
Office of Education

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STATE DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION
DIVISION OF INDIAN EDUCATION
STATE HOUSE
PHOENIX, ARIZONA

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J0576

ED002511

OBJECTIVES AND PROCESSES OF LANGUAGE TEACHING

Recommendations for concentrating efforts on the essentials of language learning can be stated didactically as principles---"do's" and "don'ts" as follows, plus one point that cannot be stated.

"Do's" and "Dont's" of language teaching:

1. Teach the language, not about the language
2. Teach the language, not (at the start) a writing system
3. Teach the language, not its vocabulary
4. Teach the language as it is, not as anyone think it ought to be
5. Teach the language as it is spoken in ordinary circumstances, not as a special literary or oratorical form
6. Teach the language, not its literature
7. Teach the language as it is now, not in terms of its history
8. Language learning is not an intellectual task.

To learn a language is to learn to use it--to respond to situations by saying appropriate things in it, to understand what others say in it, and, ultimately, to read and write it. Most native speakers of most languages are unable to describe how they produce the speech sounds they use, and are completely at a loss in describing their grammatical habits (ways of putting words together from smaller elements, ways of building sentences and utterances). They do not need to be able to give such descriptions in order to use the language. By the same token, the learner of a foreign language does not have to be able to describe the grammatical habits required in order to acquire them. To a considerable extent, time spent learning about the language is time that might better be spent in acquiring facility in the language. Moreover, comments made in class or in textbooks about a language are too often folkloristic, inaccurate, or both. When things are said about a language that is being learned, let them be accurate and let them be to the point.

Reading and writing a language.

Writing is not language, but a communicative system tied in very intimately with language. A writing system, such as that of French, Russian, or Chinese, can be learned most effectively in terms of the spoken language with which it is associated, but speaking the language cannot be efficiently learned in terms of the associated writing system. The human race was speaking for millenniums before writing was invented. Every child learns to speak and understand before he learns to read and write. Some who learn to speak and understand never learn to read and write.

Vocabulary and language learning.

Vocabulary is, of course, part of a language. The adult speaker of a language thinks of that language largely in terms of vocabulary, because it is only in connection with vocabulary that he has further language learning to do.

Every one of us learns new words and locutions every day. Furthermore, when we are exposed to a new word we need no instruction as to how to use it in sentences because it fits into a network of grammatical patterns that are second nature to us.

For the learner of a new language, however--either the child learning this first language or anyone beginning to learn an additional language--the real difficulties are:—

1. the patterns of pronunciation and of hearing; and
2. the patterns by which elements are put together into words, and by which words are strung together, with intonations, into utterances—in short, the grammar.

It is these basic patterns that constitute the learner's task. They require drill, drill, and more drill, and only enough vocabulary to make such drill possible.

When a learner has acquired these basic patterns so well that he, like the native speaker, automatically, knows what to do with a new vocabulary item, then he is really past the point of needing any guidance from the language teacher. Granting that it takes a long time for a learner to reach this point, and that rarely do language teachers manage to carry a student so far, nevertheless the learning that must go on up to that point can be defined as the elementary phase of learning the language. *

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*This article is reprinted from "California Schools", November, 1959. Professor Hockett is Professor of Linguistics at Cornell University.

Gestures for Presenting and Drilling Structures

1. Gestures to indicate first, second and third persons, singular and plural

(i) The first person singular — "I"

(a) With the extended index finger of one hand the teacher points to himself. As he makes this gesture, he says "I".

The arm not being used to make the gesture should remain passive at the teacher's side.

The gesture and statement may be repeated as often as proves desirable to ensure that all students comprehend fully.

Remember always that further presentation, with the gesture, may be found necessary after the drilling.

(b) By making the "I" gesture with one hand and, at the same time, pointing at a student with the index finger of the other hand (arm fully extended) the student will readily be persuaded to say "I".

The student should be encouraged to make the "I" gesture while making the statement himself.

The gesture is best demonstrated by having a student come out in front of the class with the teacher. In this situation the teacher may readily take hold of the student's hand and guide it into the "I" gesture position so that the student is pointing to himself.

The gesture should be demonstrated with male and female students so that the students will comprehend that there is no variation in the form of the subject pronoun.

(c) By repeating the gesture described in (b) to a number of students in turn, rapidly from one to another, the whole class can be led to make the "I" gesture and say "I".

(ii) The second person singular and plural — "You"

(a) This time the index finger of the extended arm points at a student and the teacher says "You". Again the teacher's other arm should remain passive at his side.

This gesture is best demonstrated in the first instance with a student who has been called to the front of the class. Teacher and student stand side-on to the class, facing each other, and look at each other, and not at the class.

(b) The student is then encouraged to make the "You" gesture and to say "You". Again the teacher may take the student's hand, if need be, and place it in the "You" gesture position.

Teacher and pupil may then make the gesture and say "You" to each other. The presentation and student response should be performed with female as well as male students.

(c) A development of the last gesture will enable the teacher to have all students respond to his own "I" statement (in, for example, "I have a _____") with the "You" (second person) response ("You have a _____").

The gesture is a sweeping movement of both hands (and arms), index fingers pointing towards yourself, to bring all eyes and thoughts to focus on "You", the teacher, with the response "You have a _____".

(d) Similarly, if the teacher looks at one student, either in front of the class or in the class, and sweeps his pointing finger (and arm) towards the student, he can bring the rest of the class to look at the selected student and address him as "You" or apply the second singular form of a structure to him.

(e) For the plural, the "You" gesture made towards several students in quick succession will convey the idea of plurality.

The gesture should be repeated with varying numbers of students of both sexes.

Again, for the first presentation, it is best to bring first two, then more, students to the front of the class. Both sexes should be included.

(III) The third person singular and plural — "He", "She", "It", "They"

(a) In making the gesture to indicate the third person, the main point which the teacher must bear in mind constantly is that he must look at the rest of the class, not at the student being indicated as "He" or "She".

The teacher will therefore, find it convenient to bring a student to the front of the class (say, a male student first), have him stand slightly further away from the class than he himself stands and point to him over his left shoulder. All the time the teacher is pointing, he must look at the class.

(b) The teacher may then have the students say "He" by sweeping his other arm in front of him, towards the class, finally pointing to his indicating finger.

After having once brought the class into drilling in chorus in this way, the chorus response may be elicited any number of times by merely pointing over one shoulder. (It is suggested that the teacher should point over the right shoulder to indicate "he" and over the left shoulder to indicate "she.")

(c) "She" may be presented similarly, using a female student as assistant in front of the class.

(d) "It" may be indicated by pointing in the same way, over either shoulder, to a picture or a drawing of an animal or object: or by holding an object in one hand and pointing to it with the other hand.

(e) "They" is presented similarly by gesture, having more than one student in front of the class as assistants. The pointing finger should be moved to and fro level with the teacher's shoulder to indicate the line of students in front of the class who constitute "They".

This presentation should be repeated with two, and three, and more than three, male students; repeated with two, three, and more than three female students; and again repeated in the same way with a mixed group of male and female students. The presentation should be repeated yet again with two, three, and more than three objects and pictures or drawings of animals.

In this way students will comprehend fully that one word "They" serves for all numbers greater than one, irrespective of sex or of whether the subject presented is animate or inanimate.

(f) When students have become accustomed to the use of a finger pointing over one shoulder to one student or object to present "He", "She", and "It" and to the similar indication of "They" with more than one person or thing, the indication of "They" for purposes of drilling may be formalized. The steadily pointing finger presents one person or thing: if the finger is moved quickly to and fro several times it will readily be understood to indicate plurality and represent "They".

(iv) The first person plural ---"We"

(a) The presentation of "We" is quite simple: the teacher makes an encircling movement over his own head and that of a student. After this initial presentation repeat with a female student, two, and three, and more than three male and female students, and a mixed group of male and female

students, and a mixed group of male and female students, and with himself and the class. In this way it is made clear that the one subject pronoun "We" covers all possible combinations.

(b) This gesture may be formalized also for speed of action in drilling. Once the full gesture has become thoroughly familiar, the teacher will find that pointing at the class with one hand and making a circling movement in front of him at, say, waist level, horizontally, will evoke the "We" response.

It may be used equally by the students for a situation such as "We are here"—— "You are there".

2. Gestures for "This" and "That"

(a) THIS: The teacher holds an object in one hand and points to it with the the index finger of the other hand. Alternatively, the teacher may prefer to touch an object and say "This".

(b) THAT: The teacher places the same object at a distance, say on a table, and again points.

(c) As the only essential difference in the two situations is the position of the object, these gestures can again be formalized for ease and speed of use as aids to teaching, both presentation and drilling. (Fig. 14)

An object should first be given to a student to hold, or placed on the desk for him to touch, to set the situation for him to say "This". Then the object should be moved to a more distant place to evoke "That".

Next the teacher should bring the object and hold it over the members of the class, standing in their midst, for the "This" response from the whole class, then move away as far as he can in the classroom to evoke the "That" response from the whole class.

The final step is for the teacher to take up his normal position in front of the class, and hold the object at arm's length towards the class to evoke the chorus response "This" and as far as possible away from the class, in the other hand, to evoke "That".

This situation may be still further developed by having different objects in each hand, to evoke chorus responses of the type:

This is a box. ... ... That is a pencil.
This is a box. ... ... That's a pencil.

This is a box and that is a pencil.
This is a box and that's a pencil.

and with similar objects in both hands:

This is a pencil and that's a pencil, too.

3. Use of these gestures in teaching

(1) For general presentation and drilling

Teachers will find that all of those gestures are very useful for both the presentation and the drilling of a wide variety of structures. Let us look at their application in some examples.

(a) A very simple structure:

"I am a boy/girl."

Each of the subject pronoun gestures is used in turn by the teacher as he presents this structure in all persons, with the necessary verb and complement changes.

I am	a boy/girl.
You are	a boy/girl.
He is	a boy.
She is	a girl.
We are	boys/girls.
You are	boys/girls.
They are	boys/girls.

To drill these patterns, after adequate presentation, the teacher has only to make the necessary gesture in order to evoke in turn seven chorus responses from the class without his having to utter one word to interrupt the continuity of student speech in English.

An eighth response can be evoked if he has an animal, say a cat, drawn on the board: "It is a cat".

Having made sure that the students have had adequate practice from "I" through to "They", the teacher may make the gestures at random: say, "You" followed by "We" by "You" (singular), by "He", by "You" (plural), and so on.

(b) A more complex structure:
"When I go to town I'll buy a new ball."

In (a) the purpose of the drilling was mainly directed at control of the use of the correct subject pronoun and its corresponding verb form.

In this structure the teaching point is the use of the Present tense ("go") in the subordinate clause with the Future tense in the principal clause. But again the same gestures are useful: they evoke chorus or individual responses which result in the repetition (i.e.drilling) of the required structure in its various forms.

If yet further drilling is required the teacher can set an essentially new situation by the use of one word, a "call word", for example, "doll". Thus the sentence (but not the structure) being drilled is changed to "When I go to town I'll buy a new doll" and the use of the subject pronoun gestures makes possible further repetitions of the structure.

The "return" or "gain" in English practice by the student may be started thus: for the use of each one English word (the "call word") the teacher has had his students produce a further seven sentences in English.

(2) To reinforce the qualities represented by adjectives being taught

(a) Much of the value of the Situational Method lies in visual presentation, and visual stimulation of chorus drilling. If the attributes "thickness" and "thinness" are being taught, the approach will be visual--through two objects, otherwise identical, which are "thick" and "thin" : for example, two of a series of school text-books, two pieces of wood, two red pencils of the same length but of different thicknesses.

These objects must be held in such a way that the variant quality, the "thickness" or "thinness", is apparent: for example, the books must be held so that their edges, "thick" and "thin", are toward the class. In this presentation the difference can be reinforced by the use of a gesture---the forefinger and thumb shown first wide apart, then close together to magnify the actual difference. The teacher says "thick" and "thin" with the appropriate gesture.

In like manner, the teacher's hands, held vertically before him at chest level, palms facing, can be moved close togehter or wide apart for the contrasting qualities "long---short", "wide---narrow".

(b) A development of this is the use of this gesture to obtain (as a class chorus, class division or individual drill response) the "long" or "short" answer to a question.

Imagine the class divided into two groups (A and B). The structure being taught is "He has a watch". The lesson has reached the stage where the interrogative pattern, with answers, is being drilled.

Group A asks: "Has he a watch?"

Group B may reply either: "Yes, he has a watch." or: "Yes, he has."
according to the pattern set by the teacher for the response to be drilled.

By giving the gesture of hands held vertically, say, two feet apart, the teacher can evoke the response "Yes, he has a watch" (the "long" answer) from Group B. By having the hands only a foot or less apart, the response "Yes, he has" (the "short" answer) can be elicited.

This may be developed further for a "Yes" only answer, by holding the hands only three or four inches apart.

These gestures, combined with a shake of the head from side to side ("No") or a nod ("Yes") will evoke one of the negative or affirmative responses:

No, he hasn't a watch.
No, he hasn't.
No.
Yes, he has a watch.
Yes, he has.
Yes.

In passing, it might be mentioned that it is wise to have the question repeated before each response is sought lest the impression be given that it is desirable or correct to give a double or triple response to a question.

(3) To have student assistant (s) and class copy the teacher's actions and sentence patterns

(a) The teacher has one student in front of the class as assistant. They stand side by side facing the class.

The teacher holds up one hand at shoulder height, palm toward the class, and says: "This is my hand". With a quick upward gesture of his free hand he has his assistant raise his hand. The teacher says again "This is my hand", and then makes the "I ---Student response" gesture (Fig. 2) to his assistant, who responds with "This is my hand". Next the teacher gets the second person

response from the class (Fig. 5) "That's your hand", and by pointing to the student (Fig. 7) while looking at the class he elicits the class response "That's his hand".

This can be developed to give:

Teacher: These are my hands.
Assistant: These are my hands.
Class: Those are your hands.
Those are his hands.

And, by bringing a second student to the front of the class and using first the "We" gesture, the teacher may elicit: —

These are our hands.
Those are your hands.
Those are their hands.

For another structure, the predicative adjective, a similar treatment will cover the patterns:

My hand is open. My hands are open.

These patterns may be varied at all points:

My — Your — His — Her — Our —
Your — Their;

hand — left eye — right eye — right arm/leg — left arm/leg;

hands — eyes — arms — legs;

is — are; was — were;

open — closed — raised — long.

(b) By combining the gesture with a "call word" indicating the opposite, the negative can be elicited. For example, when the teacher holds his hand up, open, he gives the call word "closed" and sets the negative pattern with a shake of his head saying:

"My hand isn't closed".

(c) Question forms can be practiced equally. For example, with his open or closed hand raised the teacher gives "open" or "closed" to set the patterns "Is my hand open?" or "Is my hand closed?".

(d) With class division into Groups A and B the teacher's gesture towards his hand will elicit the following responses:

Teacher (to Group A with gesture sweeping towards and pointing to his open hand): "open" — "question".

Group A: "Is your hand open?"
Teacher gestures as before to Group B.
Group B: "Yes, it is."

Teacher (closes hand and gestures again): "open".

Group A: "Is your hand open?"
Group B: "No, it isn't."

This may then be repeated for "his", "her", "their", by making the gestures towards his assistants.

By the use of the call word "open" and a gesture sweeping Group A's attention to a student assistant, the teacher may evoke the question "Is your hand open?" from the Group, addressed to the assistant, who must then supply the answer "Yes, it is". If the teacher has given the student assistant a quick gesture to close his hand, he will have to respond in the negative — "No, it isn't".

The drilling can now be directed to the third person (the assistant in front of the class) with the question being asked by Group A and the response being given by Group B.

The sequence of teacher activity will be:

- Teacher instructs the assistant to close his right eye by doing so himself while looking at the student.
- Teacher turns to Group A and says "open" — "question", and gives the "He —Class response" gesture (Fig. 8) to evoke the question: "Is his right eye open?"
- Teacher has meantime turned to Group B and brought them in with a sweep of his arm which terminates in the "He"gesture over his shoulder towards the assistant, to evoke the response: "No, it isn't."
- Teacher may quickly follow the "He" gesture with the "long" answer gesture to evoke: "No, it isn't open."

This all takes far longer to write than to do. In practice, the whole of this sequence take takes about 10 to 15 seconds.

If the teacher then turns quickly to the assistant, raises his left arm, has the assistant raise his left arm, then sweeps in Group B for the question and Group A for the answer, the response sequence will then be repeated.

(4) Gestures for class control

All the gestures so far treated have the virtue of controlling the responses of individuals or groups or the whole class as well as supplying the stimuli to elicit those responses.

There are yet other gestures whose use is primarily class control.

(a) Basically there are two parts of every bit of teaching by this method: the presentation of a pattern by the teacher; and the drilling of this pattern by the students. During the presentation the task of the class is to be silent and attentive (but by no means passive! --- their role is "active listening"). During the drilling the students should be vocal and the teacher, unless he is giving "call words" or instruction words such as "Question", "Answer", should be, as far as possible, silent.

Eager students may tend to break in on the teacher's preserve, the presentation. His hand then pointed to himself in the "I — Presentation" (Fig. 1) gesture, especially if combined with the raising of his hand in the traffic "stop" signal, will silence the class. When the presentation is complete, a nod of his head or a beckoning gesture with finger or hand will give the class the clue to commence drilling.

Then the "Stop" sign and "I" gesture will halt the drilling and enable the teacher to re-present anything which may appear to him to be unsatisfactory in the drilling.

(b) At times the gesture made to bring in the students and start their drilling is not sufficiently accurate for the control of stress and rhythmn. Then recourse must be had to something more precise.

(5) Some general comments on gestures

(i) Gestures are useful in both presentation and drilling.

(ii) Gestures enable presentation to be more readily understood without explanation. (Explanation in itself is a tempting highway which often leads only to confusion.)

(iii) Gestures ensure the undivided attention of the class. As a theatre audience watches the actors, so a class will watch the teacher who is also an actor. Man is an inquisitive animal—he doesn't like to "miss anything".

(iv) During drilling, gestures enable the teacher to organize students speech activity while he himself remains virtually silent.

Being silent, the teacher can hear what his students are producing, and he can halt them and re-present for re-drilling (without any explanation, which is so often beyond the students' comprehension).

(v) Gestures enable the teacher to control his class for timing, rhythmn, type of speech activity, etc.

(vi) Gestures soon become well-known to the class and eliminate almost entirely the teacher's monotonous and time-consuming repetitions of:

"Listen to me", "Watch me", "Say this after me",

"Again", "Now you ask this student", and so on.

(vii) The gestures treated above are not the only ones which can be devised and which will be found to be useful teaching aids---for they are teaching aids. Each teacher will undoubtedly vary those mentioned here: each teacher will supplement those given here with others of his own devising.